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Spy wars: a year of discontent

By Warren Richey
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Washington

Soviet efforts to unleash a new breed of smooth-mannered, sophisticated Russian spies in the West may be backfiring.

This assessment by former US intelligence officials comes following an unprecedentedly large number of arrests, defections, and countermoves this year among spies on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

In the United States:

- John A. Walker is expected to plead guilty in a Baltimore federal district court today to charges that he masterminded a four-man US Navy spy ring for the Soviets. Included in the plea arrangement is a purported understanding that Walker will detail the extent of his alleged 20-years of spying in exchange for leniency for his son, Michael, who is also expected to plead guilty to espionage charges.
- In Los Angeles, Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Richard W. Miller is on trial on charges that he passed counterintelligence secrets to the Soviets.
- Edward L. Howard, a former Central Intelligence Agency employee, last month apparently fled the US amid allegations that he told the Soviets the identity of a key US undercover informant in Moscow.

The Americans have clearly not been alone in taking casualties. The Soviet Union is said by experts to be reeling as a result of the recent defections of three well-placed Soviet intelligence officers.

"We have had to cope with a small hail storm and the Soviets have had to deal with an earthquake measuring 7 on the Richter scale," says George Carver, a former senior US intelligence official now at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Retired Adm. Bobby R. Inman, former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, adds, "The defections must be a bonanza to US counterintelligence."

The recent Soviet defectors are:

- Vitaly Yurchenko, a senior Soviet KGB official who defected to the US Aug. 1 while on assignment in Rome. He has extensive knowledge of KGB operations in North America: It was Yurchenko who identified Mr. Howard as a Soviet spy.
- Oleg Gordievsky, the top KGB officer in London, who had worked for 10 years as a double agent for the West, defected to Britain sometime last summer. Using information he provided, the British government expelled 31 Soviets for spying. Gordievsky is also reported to have helped uncover Arne Treholt, a senior Norwegian government official convicted last June of passing Norwegian and NATO secrets to the KGB between 1974 and 1983.
- Sergei Bokhan, deputy director of Soviet military intelligence (GRU) operations in Greece, defected to the US in May. He is said to have detailed Soviet infiltration of the Greek government and fingered three indivduals who were providing sensitive information and technology to the Soviets.

Experts stress there is a broader significance to these Soviet defections beyond the immediate counterintelligence gains for the west.

"When three rather high-level people defect from the Soviet Union's intelligence service in a relatively brief period of time . . . that is an indication that there is some kind of malaise within their system," says retired Adm. Stansfield Turner, CIA director during the Carter administration.

Mr. Turner, author of the recent book "Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition," says that the spy activities and defections of recent months point up "that we in democracies are vulnerable, but the Soviets are vulnerable too."

The Soviets' vulnerability stems from what Mr. Carver calls the "how are you going to keep them down on the farm once they've seen Paris" syndrome. "The major difficulty that the Soviets have is the stark contrast between the promise of the 1917 revolution and the facts and realities of the Soviet Union today," Carver says.

Soviet KGB and GRU agents are among the privileged few in Soviet society, experts say. A KGB career is viewed among the Soviets' best and brightest as a means of getting ahead quickly in the bureaucracy. These ambitious recruits are sent to the finest schools and are ushered into the ranks of the Russian elite. They are trained in foreign languages, given the opportunity to travel, and are inevitably posted overseas. Mr.Inman says simply, they are "people who could mingle" at Washington social affairs.

"Those intelligence agents who have contact with the West, who have their eyes and ears open, it looks like they are very much disillusioned with communism . . . and this brings people to dramatic decisions," says Zdzislaw Rurarz, a Polish ambassador to Japan who defected to the US in 1981.

"They are seeing the confrontation between the East and the West and they are changing sides. This is very significant," says Mr. Rurarz, who served 25 years as a Polish military intelligence officer.

"Across the board, the level of sophistication of KGB agents has gone up," says Inman. He attributes this in large part to the work of former Soviet leader Yuri Andropov, who pushed to upgrade the effectiveness of Soviet intelligence operations during his tenure as KGB chief. But Inman says the jury is still out on whether the KGB's new sophistication and style has made it more vulnerable to defections and western infiltration.

Carver is less tentative. "Others in the KGB must be thinking: 'If Gordievsky and Yurchenko can safely defect why can't we do it? If we can't trust a Gordievsky or a Yurchenko, who can we trust?' "

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FORMER CIA CHIEF PREDICTS MORE SPIES TO BE FOUND
AUSTIN, TX

A former top U.S. spymaster says he was not surprised by charges that a fugitive former CIA agent sold secrets to the Soviet Union, and predicts more double agents will be uncovered.

"The odds are high there will be spies in other agencies as well," said Bob Inman, a former director of the National Security Agency and a former deputy director of the CIA.

Inman, in an interview published Saturday by the Austin American-Statesman, said internal changes in the CIA designed to identify double agents "may be the beginning to pay off some dividends."

Former agent Edward L. Howard has been charged with selling U.S. intelligence secrets to the Soviet Union. He has been sought since he disappeared from his home in Santa Fe, N.M., less than two days after FBI agents confronted him with espionage allegations on Sept. 20.

Howard, 33, met in Austria a year ago with Soviet KGB officials and received money for U.S. intelligence secrets, according to an affidavit filed in federal court in Albuquerque, N.M., and made public Friday.

According to government sources, Howard was fired by the CIA in 1983 after he refused assignment to Moscow and was implicated by a polygraph test in petty theft of money and in illegal drug use.

Sources in Washington said the FBI was investigating a second suspect who, like Howard, was fired from a U.S. intelligence job.

Inman said it was not unusual to see a flurry of spy defections in a short period as has happened to both East and West in the past few months in Europe.

"You tend to get them in cycles," he said.

He said spies who defect often identify other spies and "moles," or double agents.

"Instantly there is a tendency for the handlers of those agents to send out an alarm that they may be exposed," Inman said. "In some cases they don't move and the leads come out and you begin to arrest people."

Inman, a retired admiral, is president of Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corp of Austin. He was director of the National Security Agency from 1977 to 1981 and deputy CIA director in 1981 and 1982.

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Inman: Strong team works

'Admiral' rallies troops: His fellow workers often refer to him as "Admiral" or just plain "Bobby." But easygoing Adm. Bobby Ray Inman, 54, the Navy's first intelligence specialist to attain four-star rank, also may be the sharpest high-tech gun in the West. "He's an outstanding individual in so many ways," says George Scalise, an MCC director and senior vice president of Advanced Micro Devices Inc. "He's brought together a team unrivaled in its technical prowess."

Technology experts across the USA hailed his selection to head MCC. Yet the former director of the National Security Agency and former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency has never worked for a company. Educated at the University of Texas, he entered the Naval Reserve in 1951 and spent 26 years working his way up to vice admiral. Inman helped persuade Congress to pass the Cooperative Research Act of 1984 — which has fostered more than 40 cooperative research ventures among USA firms. Inman's strength is his ability to rally the troops and attack a common goal. Hence, MCC.

— John Hillkirk

By Tim Dillon

INMAN: He's at the helm of joint effort to surpass Japan in high-tech

In a recent interview with USA TODAY's ***John Hillkirk,*** *Adm. Bobby Inman offered his views on:*

MCC's progress: The concept is working very, very well. We have a very strong team. And the outsiders who come and look at it have that same feeling.

On research: Research is under way in all the programs. We've done some transfers: software algorithms to attack problems. And the companies saw unique equipment approaches and said, 'Gee, we want to use that in research at home.'

On the near future: The next several months are going to be pretty sporty as we come to some of our first scheduled deliverables. And that's going to be a pretty interesting measure of whether we end up being able to do what we're forecasting.

On challenges: There's a need to accelerate creation of technology. That part of the process is going very well. There's the additional need to be sure technology gets integrated into the planning process of the companies paying for it and that they use it to design a product and take it to the marketplace fast.

On the number of firms in MCC: Not likely to change much. Could drop a couple, could add a couple.

On shareholder goals: Some of them are looking for technologies that will let them build the next generation of specific products, the kind of products they already make.

Others want to know where the technologies are moving. And they're saying, 'What kind of system will be out there in the '90s that they'll either service, produce or use?'

On MCC's culture: It's very casual, but very high performance. High risk. High performance. Mix in age. A lot of young people but also some very seasoned ones. But they're all people who want to work on very tough long-term problems. That's the central motivating factor.

On legal concerns: The National Cooperative Research Act comfortably put those behind us.

On MCC's next project: Increasingly, the question of standards:

How do you let an industry draw together and establish standards instead of waiting for them to be established de facto by one major manufacturer? How can you do that early enough so a whole range of potential players can manufacture them?